



REVITALIZATION AND REDEVELOPMENT AD- HOC COMMITTEE

The meeting of the Miami Springs Revitalization and Redevelopment Ad-Hoc Committee was held on Monday, September 19, 2011 at the Community Center in the Rebeca Sosa Theatre.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:14 p.m.

Present were: Chairman Laz Martinez
Vice Chairman Todd Stiff
Arturo Rabade
Joe Valencia

Absent: Wade Smith

Also Present: City Planner James Holland
Deputy City Clerk Suzanne Hitaffer

2. Approval of Minutes: May 16, 2011 Meeting

Committee member Valencia moved to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2011 meeting as written. Committee member Rabade seconded the motion, which carried 4-0 on voice vote.

(Item 3 was the last topic of discussion)

3. Review of the Lambert Advisory Downtown Revitalization Plan Market Analysis

City Planner Holland commented that the Lambert Advisory Market Analysis is very good report. Some of the other studies like the traffic reports are very technical.

Chairman Martinez said that the Lambert report addresses the economic needs of the community.

City Planner Holland advised the Board that he would recommend another study. At the time the Lambert study was done, Doral was not incorporated and the economic situation was different.

Chairman Martinez went through the Lambert report and highlighted some points. His background is in Real Estate and he is familiar with the price per square foot and has found that it has actually gone down both in occupancy and price per square foot. The rental market is very strong and offices are \$10.00 to \$15.00 per square foot. He asked the other members for their input. He believes that the Committee should look at the existing studies and determine what has changed.

City Planner Holland explained that it is a market share approach and the Doral market was not considered when the Lambert report was prepared in 2001.

Chairman Martinez stated that although there may be a new market in Doral that was not available in previous years, citizens do not want to go outside of their City; they would like local establishments.

Committee member Rabade noted that the Lambert study was very detailed and some of the information is over ten years old and may not be relevant today, while some of the suggestions are still valid today.

City Planner Holland said that what the City needs is capital investments from individuals who want to develop land.

Chairman Martinez mentioned that he has attempted to bring private funds to the City, but the business owners do not feel that they are going to get the business that they need. He believes that there is no overall vision to be able to enact a plan. Council and residents must come together and agree on a vision. He commented that the Committee could go back and look at the studies and make comments.

City Planner Holland advised the Committee that it is not the right market to continue to use these studies. He suggested that they should look at the Dover Kohl Plan, "Our Town".

Committee member Valencia said that he was curious that the Lambert study indicated that the price per square foot was less. If rentals are 90% filled, the price per square foot should go higher. He stated that building owners should spend money on improving the buildings to increase rental prices.

Committee member Rabade asked if the new complex on North Royal Poinciana Boulevard was successful.

Chairman Martinez replied that it is not successful because half of the first floor which is supposed to be retail businesses is empty and the condos on the second floor could not be sold so they are being rented.

City Planner Holland mentioned that the only retail businesses that are open on the first floor are the bakery and the insurance company.

Discussion ensued regarding the new two story building on North Royal Poinciana Boulevard that still has vacant retail space.

Committee member Rabade said that he would like to follow through with Vice Chair Stiff's suggestion for parking and possibly make some recommendations to Council to get the revitalization process started.

Chairman Martinez stated that studies keep being shelved. He is not against bringing the Vice Chair's idea forward to Council, but he is concerned that nothing is being done because there is no overall plan.

Committee member Rabade explained that nothing had changed in twenty years.

Diane Burkhart of 480 South Royal Poinciana Boulevard commented that there is a lot of open space in her neighborhood and she feels that beautification should be done in that area. Her idea is to reduce the road to two lanes and install a median with Royal Poinciana trees. She also emphasized the need for gateways in the City throughout all entrances and exits in Miami Springs.

Discussion ensued regarding gateways for Miami Springs.

Chairman Martinez asked the Committee if they would like to further discuss the Dover Kohl report at the next meeting. He mentioned that they would receive copies of the study and it would be on the next agenda if all agreed.

Boar member Valencia said that the Dover Kohl report is more visual and needs more thought.

Chairman Martinez announced that the Committee agreed to review the Dover Kohl study and pursue Vice Chair Stiff's plan for the revitalization and redevelopment of the Circle.

Vice Chair Stiff advised the Board that he will put together a graphic for the next meeting.

4. Follow up Discussion Regarding Gateways

Chairman Martinez said that there was discussion at previous meetings regarding the gateways and the topic never went far. A meeting was held with the Mayor of Virginia Gardens in an effort to get their involvement with the gateways.

Chairman Martinez explained that when the Committee last met in May, Council was entertaining the possibility of setting up a strategic planning process for the City with short, medium and long term goals. Council decided to have the Department Heads and Advisory Board Chairs put together six questions to send to the residents of the City, although not too many were in favor of going forward with the questions. He noted that he wrote a memo and asked it to be distributed to the other Committee members.

Chairman Martinez felt that the City cannot set a course for economic development by sending out a survey of six questions to the residents and that it would prompt more questions. He explained that he was against the questionnaire and hoped for another method.

Chairman Martinez explained that Council decided to bring in an individual to make a presentation and set up the best methodology for the strategic planning process. The facilitator emphasized that community feedback was needed to come up with a good strategic plan. Council approved the hiring of the facilitator and the individual will be at the next Council meeting.

Chairman Martinez advised the Board that the facilitator was creating an overall strategic plan for the City. He hopes that the new City Planner, Calvin, Giordano and Associates, the facilitator and the input from this Board can build a consensus for economic development. The facilitator is going to give the Board a plan that can help layout a vision and hopefully the City will be able to move forward with a plan.

City Planner Jim Holland commented that he and other employees met this afternoon with the facilitator. The plan is to have three community forums to obtain citizen input and exchange ideas.

Chairman Martinez stated that he is not sure it is a good idea and feels that there should be forums for each sector.

City Planner Holland noted that if there were forums for each sector, it may become fragmented and believes that having three forums is a cleaner approach. The facilitator has experience in working with Miami Lakes and Cutler Bay.

City Planner Holland mentioned a strategy thought of by the facilitator which would bring all ideas together after the forums. He said that one of the forums was aimed specifically at those individuals who own and operate businesses in Miami Springs.

Chairman Martinez stated that there are a lot of commercial properties and businesses that should have input and that is why he objected to the residential mailing.

5. Abraham Tract Update

Chairman Martinez commented that it is unfortunate that most of the area of the Abraham Tract is owned by Anthony Abraham and what he wants for the land is approximately twice the value of what the land is assessed at currently. He advised the Committee that Calvin, Giordano and Associates, Inc. will be present their findings to Council on October 24th in regard to the Abraham Tract.

6. Airport Golf District Update

Chairman Martinez explained that Calvin, Giordano and Associates Inc. presented an update on the Airport Golf District and the different components. They wanted to expand the work order and further studies.

Chairman Martinez noted that the City had conducted thirteen studies conducted since 1983. He thought that the committee could go back and look at some of the studies and give Council feedback. There were many studies, but no action plan going forward and he would like to make recommendations and become familiar with the studies.

Committee member Rabade commented that some of the items he highlighted were related to the lack of proper infrastructure. There is no availability of infrastructure to attract anchor stores. He said that there was discussion regarding renovation for Milam's Market, but it was not certain whether it was for structural purposes or internal purposes such as providing different types of food items.

City Planner Holland mentioned that there is a space limitation at Milam's. Studies showed that when it was a Piggly Wiggly, the residents used it more as a convenience store at that time.

Committee member Rabade said that some comments were on track, but he had a hard time visualizing how the suggestions can be implemented to provide the extra boost in revenue. There was discussion of increasing rental properties. He noted that residents need an influx of additional resources.

Committee member Valencia stated that some of the reports are outdated. He said that Milam's did a slight expansion. He commented that what he still finds current is the issue of traffic and the fact that downtown is not pedestrian friendly for walking; it is not safe. Traffic is needed for businesses to thrive, but now it is not pedestrian safe.

City Planner Holland expressed his concern that there are many lanes on the circle. A Dover Kohl study was proposed to reduce the lanes on circle.

Chairman Martinez noted that the parking has not changed. Whenever a new business is brought into the City, the question of parking is always brought up.

Committee member Rabade explained that when attempting to attract an anchor client or store, there will be an issue for parking.

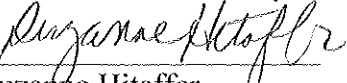
Chairman Martinez announced that the idea of a parking garage has always been interesting although it is not necessarily a cost saving alternative.

Diane Burkhardt of 480 South Royal Poinciana Boulevard advised the Board of the new Publix on Flagler and Ponce. She stated that it has parking on the second and third floors and grocery carts go up an escalator. She also mentioned that the Whole Foods on US-1 has self-contained parking.

Discussion ensued regarding the lack of parking in Miami Springs.

7. Adjourn

The meeting was duly adjourned at 9:00 p.m.


Suzanne Hitaffer
Clerk of the Board

Transcription by Elora R. Sakal.

Approved as written at meeting of : 02-20-2011

“The comments, discussions, recommendations and proposed actions of City Citizen Advisory Boards do not constitute the policy, position, or prospective action of the City, which may only be established and authorized by an appropriate vote or other action of the City Council”.
